

WYCOMBE Wanderers needed just seven minutes to ensure themselves a place in the last 16 of the Hitachi Isthmian League Cup against Staines at Loakes Park on Tuesday night. During that time they scored twice, including an own goal after just 12 seconds, while Staines were reduced to 10 men when Gary Hart was sent off.

All the action was confined to the first half and when Wanderers made it 3-0 after 20 minutes, the match ceased to be a contest. The inevitable happened after the interval with the game petering out most disappointingly.

For 45 minutes, however, Wycombe kept a surprisingly small crowd well entertained with some neat football. In the first 20 minutes they exuded confidence as the ball was played sweetly across the excellent pitch. John Priestley linked well with both full backs

Wycombe Wanderers 3, Staines Town 1 REPORT BY STUART EARP

and gave the Blues plenty of width to their attacks with Howard Kennedy also looking dangerous in midfield. Up

But even Wanderers couldn't have envisaged the way they were handed the tie on a plate in the first few minutes. Already in the Guinness Book of Records for the five second own goal at Chesham a couple of years ago, the Blues took just 12 seconds to open their account on Tuesday — thanks to Staines' Bobby Hynes.

The usual kick-off ploy saw Keith Mead pump the ball high into the opponents' half. Horseman laid it off nicely to Holifield who ran on and crossed low and hard. Hynes came sliding in and steered the ball right into the centre of the goal with his goalkeeper Rick Collier stranded.

Peter Spittle was in trouble at the other end from Hart, whose lofted shot deceived the

'keeper but landed just wide. Three minutes later, Staines' hopes of a run in the competition were shattered by a double incident.

Wycombe won a corner which was curled over by Holifield. Kennedy's header was stopped on the line by Hart and referee John Martin awarded a penalty for 'handball'. Hart was incensed by the decision, kicked the ball away and gave Mr Martin a mouthful. Out came the red card for what the referee described afterwards as 'foul and abusive language'. Once Hart had trudged off, Kennedy rammed the spot kick perfectly into the corner.

Staines seemed to realise their chance had gone while Wycombe powered forward with Dylan Evans wasting a chance after latching onto Peter Beasant's back pass.

But the Blues didn't have to

wait long for a third goal, which came after 20 minutes. Horseman clipped a free kick round the defensive wall and Alan Phillips beat Collier to nod gently into the net — a nicely worked set piece.

Staines weren't helped when Hynes was booked for dissent after 22 minutes but they managed to survive without further loss until half-time. Wycombe went slightly off the boil and were unable to put the finish on several promising attacks.

Any suspicion that the second half would be a case of 'after the Lord Mayor's show' was soon realised. Staines, with only one man up front, brought everyone back and relied on breakaways. This made life difficult for Wycombe, who nonetheless failed to find sufficient enthusiasm for further goals.

Three-nil up and cruising, some players became over-confident and dwelt far too long on the ball while the attacks generally were constructed at snail's pace. Staines seized their chance and after James had shot wide early on after a lovely run, Rob Williams stabbed home a crumb of comfort following a Beasant free kick in the 67th minute.

Derek Harris brought some spark to a flagging attack later in the second half but by then Wanderers were home and dry — and they knew it.

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, R. Davies; G. Mackenzie, J. Priestley, H. Kennedy; D. Evans, A. Horseman (sub D. Harris 73 mins), M. Holifield.

STAINES: R. Collier; G. Hart, R. Williams, K. Fiddler, E. Manners, R. Hynes (sub B. O'Sullivan 70 mins); P. Beasant, J. Love, A. Rowlands; E. James, P. Osborne.

Referee: J. Martin (Aton).
Half-time: 3-0. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Hynes 0.g. (12 sec), Kennedy pen (7 min), Phillips (20). Staines — Williams (67).